



Directorate of  
Intelligence

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## Afghanistan Situation Report

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**27 August 1985**

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**TOP SECRET****AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT**

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**CONTENTS****FIGHTING PICKS UP IN PAKTIA PROVINCE**

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Soviet and Afghan troops launched multibattalion operations in Paktia Province at Ali Khel, just opposite Parachinar, Pakistan.

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**INDIA-AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN: INDIAN VIEW OF THE DOST VISIT**

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The Indian Government expressed its willingness to convey messages between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the Geneva peace negotiations and reportedly also relayed the official Pakistani position on direct negotiations with the Afghan regime.

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**SOVIETS PREVENT CRITICISM OF AFGHANISTAN AT WORLD FESTIVAL OF YOUTH**

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Moscow prevented Western delegates to the World Festival of Youth from openly protesting the Soviet presence in Afghanistan.

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**IN BRIEF**

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**PERSPECTIVE**

**THE ORDEAL OF A FRENCH JOURNALIST IN AFGHANISTAN**

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During his imprisonment in Afghanistan, French television journalist Jacques Abouchard was generally well-treated by his Afghan and Soviet captors, probably because Moscow was afraid of damaging its relations with France.

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This document is prepared weekly by the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis and the Office of Soviet Analysis. Questions or comments on the issues raised in the publication should be directed to

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**PUBLICATION NOTE**

Unless major developments warrant otherwise, we will not publish the **AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT** next week. The next report will appear on 10 September 1985.

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**FIGHTING PICKS UP IN PAKTIA PROVINCE**

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[REDACTED] a multibattalion  
Soviet and Afghan force is operating in northern Paktia  
Province at Ali Khel--opposite Parachinar, Pakistan.

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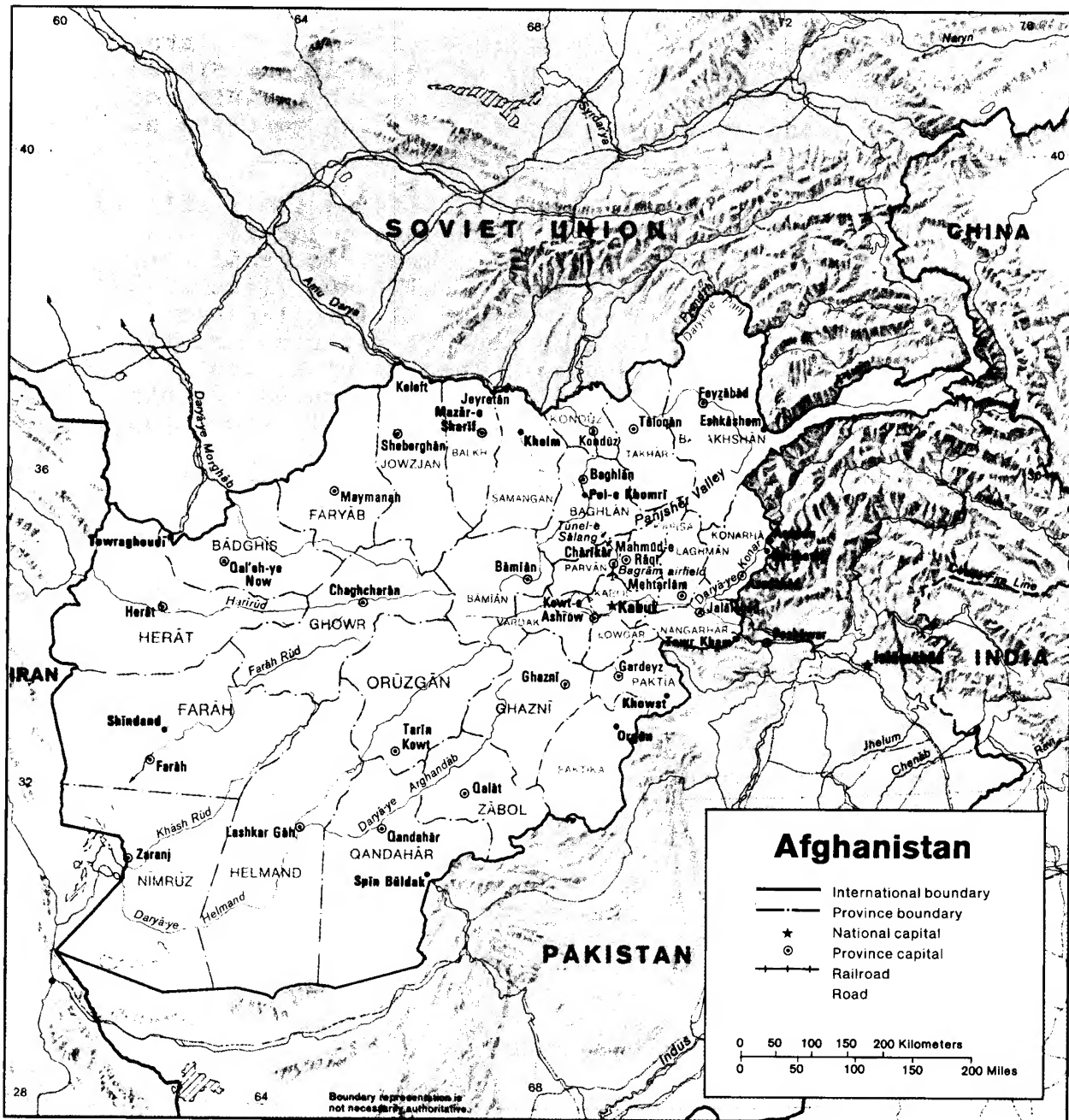
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**INDIA-AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN: INDIAN VIEW OF THE DOST VISIT**

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During the seventh meeting of the Indo-Afghan Joint Commission, held early this month in New Delhi, the Indians transmitted Pakistani views on the Geneva peace process to Afghan Foreign Minister Dost, according to a senior Indian official. The official told US diplomats that New Delhi would not mediate between Afghanistan and Pakistan, but would be willing to continue to act as a conduit for messages between the two sides. He also said that Dost believed that direct Pakistani-Afghan talks on Afghanistan would be possible because Islamabad no longer viewed them as equivalent to recognition of the Kabul regime.

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The meeting between the two foreign ministers broke little new ground in bilateral relations between India and Afghanistan. New Delhi agreed to provide technical aid to Afghanistan's public health program, small-scale industry, and power generation; and to continue to help finance a children's hospital and an industrial park in Kabul. The two countries also signed a cultural agreement.

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**Comment:**

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For its part, New Delhi's willingness to serve as a communications link between Afghanistan and Pakistan could reflect India's new activism on Afghanistan. In June, Rajiv Gandhi had foreign Secretary Bhandari personally relay to Gorbachev India's impression that the United States was willing to hold serious talks on Afghanistan.

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New Delhi downplayed the significance of the Dost visit for bilateral relations and merely announced that the two sides had resolved some transportation problems that have impeded trade since the last Commission meeting in Kabul in October 1983. The grant aid continues the small Indian assistance program begun by Indira Gandhi in 1969.

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#### **SOVIETS PREVENT CRITICISM OF AFGHANISTAN AT WORLD FESTIVAL OF YOUTH**

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Several western European delegates attending the World Festival of Youth in Moscow earlier this month intended to publicly object to Soviet policy on Afghanistan, but were stopped by Soviet countermeasures. A Swedish delegate, for example, tried to read a speech critical of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, but was prevented from doing so when the auditorium's address system coincidentally "broke down". On another occasion, several Norwegian delegates showed up for a parade in Red Square wearing identical shirts saying, "Soviets out of Afghanistan;" they were summarily rounded up and returned to their hotel. The Norwegian delegation was subsequently told that if such "provocative" actions recurred, the Soviets would no longer be able to guarantee their security.

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**Comment:** The Soviets were unwilling to tolerate even a minimal give-and-take on the Afghanistan issue. Their tight control of the discussions alienated the more sophisticated representatives from western Europe and other advanced nations. [REDACTED]

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**IN BRIEF**

-- Afghan Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost and Pakistani Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan met with Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Korniyenko on 26 August en route to the Geneva peace talks, according to press reports. It is not clear if the two foreign ministers had private discussions. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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-- Afghan Prime Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand left for Moscow on 13 August, according to the US Embassy in Kabul. His unannounced departure may be related to persistent rumors that Moscow would promote Keshtmand to the largely ceremonial head-of-state position now held by Babrak Karmal, leaving Babrak with the sole title of Secretary General of the Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Although Keshtmand's promotion would bolster his position vis-a-vis Babrak, Keshtmand has reportedly argued to stay in his post, believing he will be more effective there. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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**TOP SECRET****PERSPECTIVE****THE ORDEAL OF A FRENCH JOURNALIST IN AFGHANISTAN**by **NESA**

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Jacques Abouchard's account of his six-week long imprisonment in Afghanistan, **In the Cage of the Bear**, gives a unique picture of Soviet and Afghan handling of suspected foreign intelligence agents. The Soviets and Afghans tried to force Abouchard to say he worked for US or French intelligence by using threats, frequent and prolonged interrogation, and isolation, but they did not physically abuse him. Abouchard denied any ties to the CIA or French intelligence, but provided his captors with some potentially useful intelligence information on the insurgents.\*

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**Capture by Soviets**

Jacques Abouchard, a noted French television journalist, and two French camera technicians entered Afghanistan from Pakistan with an insurgent band allied with resistance leader Sayyid Ahmand Gailani on 17 September 1984. Abouchard intended to film for French television the group's planned attack on Soviet and Afghan regime forces. Although Abouchard's network is controlled by the French government, he claims that the French Foreign Ministry and the French Embassy in Islamabad were unaware of his project.

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Soviet airborne troops apparently had advance intelligence about Abouchard's plans. They captured him in Qandahar Province after his group had been in Afghanistan only a day; the French technicians escaped to Pakistan. The Soviet commander indicated that he had known when the party was going to enter Afghanistan. Abouchard believes that Afghan Government agents found out about the party's plans at Chaman, the Pakistani border town where the party stayed for several days.

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\* Abouchard's book, **Dans La Cage de L'Ours**, was published in France in 1985. He is currently working in Washington for the French television station Antenne 2.

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The Soviet airborne troops treated Abouchard correctly. They did not interrogate him extensively during the 24-hour period they held him. Abouchard refused to say whether he was accompanied by other journalists and his captors did not pursue the question. They also untied his arms after an hour and shared their food and water with him. They seemed much more interested in France--repeating frequently "Paris" and "champagne"--than in Afghanistan. [REDACTED]

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The Soviet forces, however, stole Abouchard's traveler's checks, toothpaste, and toilet paper. Only their commander prevented them from taking his watch. [REDACTED]

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Abouchard noted that the troops' clothes were filthy, their boots had no laces, and they used string to hold up their pants. [REDACTED]

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### Soviet Interrogation in Qandahar

After his capture, Abouchard was taken to Qandahar where he was interrogated for three days by Soviet and Afghan officers. The senior Soviet officer asked Abouchard about CIA operations in France and CIA relations with French intelligence, but the officer did not pursue the subject when Abouchard said he knew nothing. The officer at Qandahar was fairly relaxed and ended the interrogation by recalling the fine relations between France and the Soviet Union during World War II. [REDACTED]

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Lower-ranking Soviet officers were more hostile towards Abouchard. One officer accused him of belonging to a neo-Nazi organization and of planning sabotage. [REDACTED]

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### Afghan Interrogation Techniques

Abouchard was then taken to Sidorat prison in Kabul. During his first week there, Afghan intelligence (Khad) officers tried to force Abouchard to admit that he was either an employee of the CIA or French intelligence. During the second and third weeks, the Afghans tried to persuade him to admit that he had been forced into carrying out his project by his superiors at French television. Two Khad officials interrogated him most of the time. [REDACTED]

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Abouchard says that Khad director Dr. Najibullah, who joined the interrogation before Abouchard's press conference and trial, tried to convince him to be cooperative. Najibullah was correct but cold. None of the interrogators tried to recruit Abouchard to work for Afghan or Soviet intelligence. [redacted]

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Afghan intelligence used threats, frequent and prolonged interrogation, and isolation to try to extract a confession:

- They threatened Abouchard with a long prison term unless he cooperated.
- Although they never threatened physical violence, Abouchard shared a cell with Afghans who were beaten and he occasionally heard screams of people being tortured.
- Afghan intelligence questioned him nearly every day for periods lasting up to 12 hours. Most interrogations started at dawn, although some began around midnight.
- They gave him a monotonous diet of thin soup, corn-beef, and bread; he had to sleep in a cold, small cell with three other people, wash with cold water despite the cold weather, and was allowed to use the toilet only at certain times. He was allowed walks only rarely. He was permitted to see a doctor.
- They isolated Abouchard from nearly all contact with the outside world, rejecting his repeated requests to see the French ambassador in Kabul or receive letters from his family and colleagues. They also forbade contact with all prisoners except those in his cell. Abouchard heard no news because prison guards intentionally lowered their transistor radios during news broadcasts. [redacted]

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### Abouchard's Response

Abouchard made few compromises with his interrogators. He admitted only to having entered Afghanistan illegally and to having claimed falsely on his passport to be a businessman. Abouchard denied

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[redacted]

categorically that he had links to the CIA and French intelligence and claimed he revealed little important intelligence information. He did, however, provide the Khad with a description of the physical appearance of the insurgents he accompanied, and described where they procured their arms and how the Pakistani Army allowed them to pass unhindered through numerous roadblocks in Baluchistan. He claimed this information was too vague to be of much use. [redacted]

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### His Show Trial and Release

After his interrogation at Sidorat, Afghan and Soviet authorities displayed Abouchard at a press conference and trial. There they accused him of being a member of foreign intelligence services and presented his captured camera equipment and introductory letter to an insurgent group in Qandahar as state's evidence.

[redacted]

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After a brief show trial, Abouchard was found guilty and sentenced to 18 years in prison. Abouchard's treatment improved during his short incarceration at Puli-Charki prison in Kabul. He could awaken when he wanted, ate better food, and circulated freely among most of the prisoners. He was released on 29 October after only five days. [redacted]

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We believe that Abouchard was released quickly after his trial because Moscow wanted to limit damage to its relations with France. Abouchard's capture received widespread publicity in France and sparked protests and demonstrations, including several outside the Soviet embassy in Paris. Even the French Communist Party sought his release. The French government told Soviet officials that bilateral relations would suffer seriously if Abouchard were imprisoned for a long period. [redacted]

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We believe Abouchard was better treated than many suspected foreign agents would have been because he is a well-known French journalist. Soviet and Afghan authorities treated a French doctor whom they captured in 1983, Philippe Augoyard, far worse. Augoyard spent five months in prison even though he praised the Afghan government and criticized the insurgents at a public trial. Afghan authorities also periodically threatened Augoyard with hanging.\*

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\* Augoyard's book **"La Prison Pour Delit D'Espoir"** was also published in France in 1985. Augoyard is still active in France in support of the insurgency.

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